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Down Rhythm Road

By ADELE JOHNSON

East High School, Rockford

"It would have been a good poem like the other one." Neil looked at me somewhat accusingly, I thought.

"Yes," I agreed. "It would have been a good poem."

I felt a little guilty. The school year was almost over, and we had not taken the time to let our "snow poem" grow. I leafed through the half sheets of paper musingly. Many of the tenth-grade responses to the last snow of the season were of the "glistening white blanket" variety. However, there were some possibilities:

"Millions of tiny troopers fill the stormy sky."

"The angels are having pillow fights."

". . . these merrymakers of the sky . . . as the ground opens its wind-swept arms."

"The snow wind screamed around the corner and whistled like an old grandma through her false teeth."

"I've watched a beauty operator giving scalp massages. The dandruff falls right and left."

"When the snow falls, I don't mind the cold."

"Large white flakes, floating down, playing tag."

"The heavens are being cleaned and the dirt is falling on us. The dirt in heaven is the whitest thing on earth."

"The flakes are tiny white lace doilies with their perfect pointed corners freshly starched."

Yes, it might have been a good poem like the other one.

The other class poem had grown out of the discussion of Dorothy C. Fisher's essay, "Vermont," in which Mrs. Fisher

describes Vermont as a person with human traits. Casually I had asked, "What kind of person is Illinois?"

"He's big and strong. He's a farmer."

"No, he isn't. He's a miner, dirty and sweaty."

"He's a big business man."

"Maybe a factory worker at a machine."

"Say, how about the women?"

"Oh, women!"

And so on it went until I suggested that each take out a half sheet of paper and write his own idea of Mr. Illinois. For several minutes pens scratched across the papers with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Then the pupils exchanged papers for an informal evaluation. This period of time was a delightful one for the teacher. The unrestrained expression of a tenth grader as he appraises and comments on his fellow's idea runs the gamut of emotion from supercilious boredom to enthusiastic interest, from puzzled inquiry to triumphant scholarly tenth-grade approval.

A volunteer secretary took her place at the board in answer to my request. Then I asked for the "especially good" part of each one. Every English teacher knows there is a good part to every paper. Soon the board was covered with fragments. "No special color or creed . . . housewife, teacher, nurse . . . a farmer who toils every day . . . with a tanned face . . . hot and sweaty . . . he is rich and he is poor . . . he has a college degree . . . he started high school but didn't finish . . . deaf from the roar of the drill and rumble of falling coal . . . his hands stained with red . . . the man at the wheel . . . the big boss who sees that others have work."

Next we listed the various occupations that ought to be included: the factory worker, the farmer, the miner, the white collar worker, the trucker, the meat packer, the big business man. Then came the problem of putting the ideas together in sentences. By this time the class was enthusiastic and noisy, but not too noisy. Using the ideas listed on the board, one after another would declare, "I would say it this way." Usually another pupil would disagree. "Well, you say it better than." And the disagreeing one would make a valiant effort. The secretary became frantic trying to write down all the words of wisdom. Occasionally there would be a contribution that would be greeted by a quiet "I like that" or a boisterous "That's good!" At the end of the hour I was exhausted. The class had ceased their vehement contributions long enough to

suggest that a committee put the finishing touches on Mr. Illinois. I agreed. I forgot to give the assignment, too.

A self-appointed committee composed of two boys and two girls presented themselves during my so-called free period. More wrangling about word choice and heated debates about spelling and punctuation broken by shouts of laughter and appeals to teacher ended only when the bell rang. Thrusting their battered papers into the hands of Warren, who had a typewriter at home, the committee left. The next day Warren read the following to the class. He had added the last four lines and had given the selection its title. The group gave unstinted approval.

RECIPE FOR A NATION

Sift in people of all ages, races, creeds, rich and poor,
The humble and the proud,
The scholarly and the illiterate,
The strong, the weak.
Stir in a farmer, the tender of the nation's crops,
Toil-worn, weather-beaten, yet contented,
A quiet smile on his sun-furrowed face,
A sweaty bronze statue against the gold of his native prairies,
A man who works with what he has.
Take a factory worker covered with grease from head to toe,
Controlling his machine,
Stern master of the noisy wheels,
One of those thousands whose rest comes with the whistle.
Mix him well with a railroader, a trucker, a pilot, a shipper,
Whose duty it is to carry the life-blood of our land
Through the arteries of the nation.
Add a meat packer preparing the nation's dinner,
His hands and apron stained with red,
And a miner, almost deaf from the scream of the drill
And the rumble of falling coal,
His headlight shining dimly in the constant night below the ground.
Fold in a white-collar worker, a secretary, a typist, a nurse,
The professionalist, the businessman,
The person who keeps production rolling,
The individual who takes the responsibility of many on his back.
Mix in each ingredient thoroughly,
Pour into a container the size and shape of Illinois;
Heat over the flame of patriotism till done.
(For strength—make forty-eight and tie together with Democracy.)

Is it poetry? I don't know. I asked the class. Their decision was a qualified one. It has rhythm, they agreed. There are some good word pictures and sense appeals. There is a sincere expression of emotion. It may not be poetry, but it is poetic. Thus their

reasoning ran. One lad summed up the attitude of the group toward their joint effort. "We like it whether it is poetry or not, maybe because we wrote it." A composite tenth grade beatific smile gave silent approval.

Another group verse project of my sophomores grew out of a discussion of "What is poetry?" We had read and talked about a number of poems, both rhymed and free verse. The usual responses came.

"It rhymes."

"Not always."

"Well, it can. Anyway it has rhythm."

"It tells a story."

"Sometimes it just paints a picture."

"It tells how you feel about something."

I asked the class if they would like to hear some definitions of poetry. Not entirely unwilling, they listened as I read from Carl Sandburg: "Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly the air. Poetry is the achievement of the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits."

The expressions were varied. John stopped daydreaming for an instant. Jean frowned. I'm certain that Jim muttered under his breath—something about the old girl being off again. Dick looked around to see if someone would join him in laughter. Most of the class were quietly courteous, or phlegmatic. I continued to read. "Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable." I read through at least twenty definitions. By this time the tenth graders were frankly curious. They asked for certain definitions to be reread and voiced strong approbation or disdain. We looked up *synthesis* in the dictionary.

Finally I suggested that they try to formulate their own definitions of poetry, patterning them after Carl Sandburg's if they wished. I gave them five minutes to write their ideas on a half sheet of paper. And I even let them use pencil. It seemed necessary to assure the dubious ones that they would not be graded, that it was just for fun, that the only way they could fail was to write nothing. All wrote. Faint smiles and thoughtful frowns played tag across thirty-three tenth grade faces.

Since the definition writers were loath to bare their souls before the class, I asked permission to read the papers aloud without mention of names. Permission was granted. Carefully I shuffled

the papers to make certain that no tell-tale order could identify the author. Clad in the aura of comfortable anonymity, the class settled back. As I read the definitions, only an averted look, a tinge of pink, and a lower lip caught between nervous teeth gave evidence of the writer. I read through the papers without comment. Half audible sounds of approval and disapproval and sly glances about in an attempt to identify the author detracted not at all.

"Well?" I inquired, putting down the last paper.

"I liked the one about the sea."

I reread the one about the sea. "Poetry is the surging, lashing sea, probing inquiring fingers at the impenetrable doorways of life." I read another and still another. I just had to let the class know that I thought they had done well. In fact, I was thrilled. Even this cursory reading had revealed many poignantly beautiful ideas. I told them unreservedly how proud I was. And they were proud too.

"You know," one of them mused, "they sounded almost like poetry when you read them."

Not a dissenting voice was raised when I suggested that they could put their thoughts together to try to make a poem—if they wanted to. The class decided to form small groups of five or six. Each small group underlined in red the best part of each paper given them. Since it was evident that there would not be time enough to finish before the bell rang, it was decided that anyone who did not have class during my free period might come down to help put the poem together. The three who appeared worked eagerly on the red penciled papers, seriously discussing the relative merits of two similar passages. I tried to correct spelling papers, but my heart was not in it. At the end of the period the three bards handed to me a free verse poem made up of phrases from almost half the papers handed in. I thought it was good, and I told them so.

The news of what we had done in this class spread quickly to my other two sophomore classes. They demanded to know whether or not they had to do what the first class had done. Assured that it was not at all compulsory, they asked why the one class got to do it when they couldn't. They could, and they did. The selection by the first class was published in the *Best Illinois High School Poetry of 1949*. It begins "Poetry is the surging, lashing sea. . . ." A selection by one of the other groups follows:

POETRY

Poetry is a whirling mass of something
Going through the air,
A colorful wind in the woods.
It is a pebble being skipped across the water,
Clear, greenish, with scarcely a ripple.
Poetry is the beating of raindrops on the window,
The bond between reality and fantasy.
Poetry is a world of enchantment.
I have the map and I know
Where X marks the spot,
But I never really find the treasure.
Poetry is made of words put together
To explain the unseen
And the unknown,
And also to explain the visible
And the known.
Poetry is the transmission of thought
Between sky-blue pink clouds
And the earth six feet under.
Poetry may be cement blocks
Falling down a spiral staircase,
Food for the hungry,
Or a knife covered with blood.

This is the version of still another group :

POETRY

Poetry is a swallow
As it soars through the sky.
It is a white cloud
Tied with a bright blue ribbon,
The sound of something running,
Heard, but not seen.
Poetry is the end of an eclipse
Against the black sky,
A rain-washed blade of grass
Coming over the hill of imagination.
It is the touch of velvet,
The odor of spice.
Poetry is a charred piece of paper
One tries in vain to read.
Poetry is the word
Spoken yesterday
And what one did today.

The committee from one class decided that Justine's ideas made a poem by themselves.

POETRY

A fantasia
Which takes the souls
To cleanse and enlighten
And then returns
To their owners.

Candy cane trees
With peppermint leaves—
First date, first kiss, first love.

A glimpse of ecstasy,
The reality of contentment,
A sudden surge of pain,
The tick of the clock
After death.

Sometimes poems make their first appearance as a sentence in a paragraph written in class. Usually I check such a passage and write a polite "Please see me" at the top of the paper. When the pupil appears, I simply tell him that I think he has written something unusually good. Then I read the marked passage aloud and comment briefly on the rhythm or imagery and tell the writer that his idea has the possibility of growing into a poem if he is willing to work on it. I try to get the pupil to suggest several ways of developing his idea. Usually, not always, the pupil is happy about the recognition and is eager to help his poem grow.

One little writer who has composed some very acceptable verse was discovered in this way. In the midst of a rather trite description of a willow tree, I found this sentence: "With its branches flowing toward the ground, the tree looked like a flashing fountain filled with millions of laughing, green raindrops dancing down from the over-flowing brim."

"Dolores," I said gently—gently because Dolores was rather shy—"thank you for telling me that a willow tree looks like a green fountain. I had never noticed it before." Dolores almost smiled. She picked up her paper, and the next day she put this poem on my desk.

THE HAPPY WEeping WILLOW

The weeping willow,
An overflowing fountain of green,
Flashing in radiant beauty
As millions of laughing green raindrops come dancing,
Dancing along the shy arched branches,
Each tiny leaf aquiver with joy
As carefree daytime breezes pass,
And whispering night winds
Sing the green fountain to sleep.

Dolores went on to write other tree poems: "Winter Trees" and "The Pine Tree" and "Remember the Tree." She also wrote "The Path" which appeared in the *Best Illinois High School Poetry of 1949*. From that poem I learned to look for "small clouds of saffron" and I attuned myself to flowers singing "brightly colored petal songs."

In a descriptive paragraph about the wind, Janis wrote this: "The lonely wind twists my hair and gently brushes it away from my face as if it were trying to nestle around my neck, afraid of being alone." From this sentence Janis wrote this short verse.

THE WIND

Tonight
The wind is cold;
It twists my hair around its icy fingers,
Nestles about my neck,
Afraid of being alone,
This wind.

Sometimes it is a paragraph that is a potential poem. Jean wrote about the Florida swamps which she had seen. Only a few changes were necessary to produce a poem.

A FLUTTER OF WINGS

I slowly glide
Across the silver water
In the deep of Florida,
Spellbound
At the strange beauty
Around me.
Spanish moss
Hangs from the tops
Of the tired cypress trees,
Bent and knotted with age.
The dismal gray
Is broken
By a great flutter of wings
And a blur of pink
As a flamingo
Soars to the sky.

In order to help my pupils develop a sensitivity to the melody of everyday sounds, I give my "fifteen minute" assignment. I ask each one to take notes on what he hears during a period of fifteen minutes. These we read and discuss in class. Similar assignments can be given for smelling, tasting, seeing, and feeling. In response to the listening assignment, Ruth had over a page of scrawled notes

which she flourished as she announced that she had sat in the barn on a milk stool the night before. Her desk had been the back of a shovel. Thus equipped she wrote down the sounds of a rural evening in a barn. At first Ruth didn't care much about the idea of trying to put her sounds into rhythmic prose; she would rather ride her horse. However, when I suggested that she work on it in class, she succumbed. She omitted a phrase or two and rearranged some of the details.

IN THE BARN

I hear the buzzing
Of the milking machine motor,
The slow tick-tock of the suction cups,
The bawling of little calves
For their mothers,
The mooing of the mother cow
As the calf is taken from her,
The loud singing of my brother
Doing his chores,
The rustling of straw
As the cows make themselves comfortable,
The slow rhythmic munching
As the cows chew their cuds,
The constant swish, swish of their tails,
The scraping of a restless hoof
On the cement floor,
The rippling of milk
Poured from pail to can,
The quiet lapping
As the cats drink their milk,
The sounds of oats dribbling
As I feed my pet horse,
And the hollow stomping sound
As she pounds against the wooden floor.
All this I hear in the barn.

The farm and her family became the topic for Carolyn's series of picture poems entitled "Fragments from the Farm." We had been writing "picture sentences" in class, and I had been emphasizing that the pictures were to be within their own experience. Each pupil had been reading his best sentence to the class, the best one having been selected by another pupil. When Carolyn read hers, one of her classmates commented, "That isn't a sentence. That's a poem just as good as those we read in the book." That settled it; Carolyn had written a poem.

MY BROTHER

Down the lane
My brother strides,
A general
With his plodding army
Of silent cows.

I encouraged Carolyn to write more pictures. She gave us a field of "blue-green corn, young and straight and fearless." She wrote about "baby cats of cotton-candy fuzz . . . our perfume counter of hay . . . tiny pigs close together for warmth." She pictured her mother:

ROYALTY

A queen
Rules our kitchen,
Her scepter, a mixing spoon,
Her crown, the new-born gleams
Of the morning sun—
My mother.

Flowers, a favorite subject of poets, gave Janice her outlet. She even carried a seed catalog around after I questioned the accuracy of one statement. Janice was right. I learned about the Moon-rose. "Wavering on its leafy vine, it turns to catch the muted breath of perfect night." I discovered the Red Blaze which "flaunts its fragrance from a lustrous golden throat" and the Rosenelfe blossoms which "Pick up the lingering rays of closing day, tossing them up to the sky, transforming the garden into a scintillating sea of fragrant color." I know now that a Nocturne is as "fragrant as the starlit winds of night and sweetly sentimental as the haunting strains of a half-remembered serenade."

Boys, as well as girls, find that it is fun to write in rhythm. Ross found that "Spring steals over a busy state with a sweet serenity." Arthur heard the wind "whistle short sweet lyrics" and birds "throwing their songs at the sun." Warren wrote about "A stormy Jupiter throwing thunderbolts at will, crashing the sky drums."

I am not certain that my pupils have written poetry, but they have produced rhythmic prose. Through their writing I feel that they have become more appreciative of the beauty of the written and spoken word and have become able to share the emotion of a writer of rhythm without being shamefaced about it. Helping pupils to write is not entirely a matter of technique. I have found that there must be a good feeling of comradeship within the class and between the teacher and the individual pupil. When the feeling that "it's fun to write" permeates the class, the teacher does not have to do a great deal except encourage. This companionship can not be entirely identified with the "rapport" of education courses. In addition to the implications of "rapport" there must be an emotional, but not maudlin, mutual appreciation of the simple, the lovely, the bizarre. Possibly it is based on a premise as fragile and fleeting as "butterflies at dusk" and as intangible as "the wind throwing whispers at a tree." Or perhaps the foundation is as matter-of-fact as "It's kinda fun to write, once you get into it."

What Are You Doing?

The *Bulletin* will welcome accounts, short or long, of your teaching experiments and experiences. What are you doing in your classroom that other teachers may want to try? What is a "trick of the trade" that you have learned this year? What has been your most successful unit, and how did you conduct it? What content has proved most suitable for a particular class? The *Bulletin* is intended primarily as a clearing house of information for the improvement of English teaching. Will you share with us?

Report of the Curriculum Committee Illinois Association of Teachers of English

On November 3, 1950, the Executive Board of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English gave the newly appointed Curriculum Committee of the Association a special assignment. This committee was asked to keep English teachers of the state informed as to the work of the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program (I.S.S.C.P.) and to encourage English teachers to participate in whatever type of curriculum revision in English might be consistent with the needs of their students and with the general philosophy of the state curriculum program.

The members of the Curriculum Committee agreed at their first meeting that the most satisfactory way of completing their assignment would be for them to publish in the English *Bulletin* a series of reviews or digests of the I.S.S.C.P. publications which, up to the present date, are ten in number. The following article, a digest of the first bulletin of the I.S.S.C.P., is the first in the series of articles which will appear in the English *Bulletin*. English teachers in the state should be interested in knowing that they do have representation on the Steering Committee of the I.S.S.C.P. in the person of Miss Lois Dilley, a past president of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English.

The Curriculum Committee is hopeful that every English teacher in Illinois will read the series of reviews and digests from the *Bulletin* and will become familiar also with the original publications. One copy of each of these bulletins has been sent to each school in Illinois. However, if the bulletins are no longer available to you, or if your faculty wishes additional copies, you may secure copies of the bulletins without charge by writing Mr. Vernon L. Nickell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Centennial Building, Springfield, Illinois.

The Committee hopes also that every English teacher will confer with his principal relative to the rapidly expanding I.S.S.C.P., which has recently been affiliated with the National Life Adjustment Education Program, and that he will discuss with his principal ways and means by which the present English program can be evaluated and improved to meet the needs of students and to become an integral, functional part of the entire school

curriculum. The Committee welcomes this opportunity to help teachers of English find their place in the "sun" of the state movement for curriculum improvement.

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The Philosophy of ISSCP

MAURINE SELF

Jacksonville High School

"Your graduates can't read, write, or compute; you ought to teach people how to think; your school is snobbish; cut out the frills and reduce costs"¹ . . . such is the criticism, both just and unjust, being leveled at our secondary schools. All over the country educators have turned introspective and are taking measures to improve the school program. In Illinois efforts to bring about improvement in the curriculum of the secondary schools have been coordinated in the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program.

In August, 1948, appeared the first bulletin of the Illinois Secondary Curriculum Program called *Guide to the Study of the Curriculum in the Secondary Schools of Illinois*. The final draft of this bulletin was prepared by Victor M. Houston, Associate Director of ISSCP, Illinois State Normal University; Charles W. Sanford, Director of ISSCP, University of Illinois; and J. Lloyd Trump, University of Illinois. The purpose of the bulletin, as stated in the Foreword by Vernon L. Nickell, Superintendent of Public Instruction, is "to present suggestions regarding ways and means of effecting curriculum improvements in the secondary schools of Illinois."²

Exactly what is ISSCP? It is "sponsored by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in cooperation with lay and professional groups interested in secondary education."³ Representatives of these groups compose a Steering Committee which forms the policies of the program. High schools all over the state who wish to participate in curriculum improvement are invited to become a part of the program, to receive the benefits of basic curriculum studies sponsored by the program, and to send teachers to workshops conducted by the program. Some schools are selected to become special centers for curriculum study and are assisted in their work by teams of consultants from the institutions of higher learning. From the beginning, however, one policy has been the keynote—that curriculum improvement should have its origin

¹ *Guide to the Study of the Curriculum in the Secondary Schools of Illinois*, a Publication of the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, Circular Series A, No. 51, Bulletin No. 1, Authority of the State of Illinois, 1948, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

in the local school and should be "the result of the work of teachers, administrators, and lay persons in local schools."⁴

Any action toward curriculum improvement should begin with a look at the purpose of the school, for the curriculum may be thought of as the means for accomplishing that end. "The purpose of the school is to provide learning experiences so that the needs of youth and the requirements of society may be met effectively."⁵ Selecting the learning experiences which will best satisfy those needs and requirements seems to be the job of curriculum makers.

The planners of curriculum in each school need to draw up their own lists of the "needs of youth" and the "requirements of society." Helpful statements of purposes have lately come from the Educational Policies Commission and the Report of the Harvard Committee, both of which are summarized in outline form in the *Guide*.⁶ The following outline of "the needs of youth and the present social setting" may be used as a discussion guide for local school groups starting to consider curriculum improvement.

The Needs of Youth

- Tools of communication
- Strong body, sound attitude toward it
- Satisfactory social relationships
- Competence in and appreciation of improved family living
- Knowledge of, practice in, and zeal for democratic processes
- Sensitiveness to importance of group action
- Effectiveness as consumers
- Adjustment to occupation
- Development of meaning for life

THE UNITED STATES

The Social Setting

- Increasing difficulty of understanding complex character of society
- Declining supply of natural resources
- Increasing potential material abundance from technological gains
- Increasing leisure
- Increasing concentration of political and economic power
- Declining investment opportunities
- Lessening of opportunities of rising from one socio-economic class to another
- Increasing controls by labor, industry, and agriculture
- Increasing influence of radio, press, and the movies
- Lessening influence of family, church, and neighborhood

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

THE WORLD

Revolutionized by social change
 Destined to become even more closely interdependent
 Dominated by ideals of national sovereignty
 Inhibited by failure to realize the importance of peoples of
 other nations
 Influenced by failure to recognize the necessity of world
 controls ⁷

The ISSCP suggests that as schools make plans for curriculum revision, they must accept these beliefs:⁸

- "1. The curriculum consists of all of the experiences which pupils have under the control of the school. . . ."
- "2. Effective curriculum revision is a *grass roots job*. . . ."
- "3. Local efforts will be more effective if they enlist the support of respected representative laymen. . . ."
- "4. The school staff . . . must take the initiative."
- "5. Local studies . . . will provide the facts necessary for arousing people to action."
- "6. Consultants from outside the community may assist . . . but must never step out of the role of consultants. . . ."
- "7. There is no real issue between the basic tenets of 'general' and 'vocational' education. . . ."
- "8. There is no real issue between education to serve the demands of our democratic society and education to further the best interests of the individual. . . ."
- "9. Plans for curriculum revision must be carefully developed. . . ."
- "10. Curriculum revision will be effective to the degree that it is accompanied by continuous evaluation of the extent to which clearly defined objectives are being reached."
- "11. . . . Administrators who would encourage experimentation must . . . encourage the one who bears the title of 'teacher' to become 'learner' along with his pupils."
- "12. The relationships among all the participants in curriculum revision must be maintained along strictly democratic lines. . . ."

The ISSCP does not dictate a course to be followed in curriculum improvement but suggests four general types of curriculum projects, namely, (1) improvement of existing courses, (2) enrichment in broad fields, (3) development of a common learnings course, and (4) provision for elements which cut across subject areas regardless of school organization.⁹ Each local school should, however, plan its own curriculum project to fit its own needs.

There are certain psychological levers which schools may use to pry themselves loose from the present situation. Some of these

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, statements condensed from pp. 20-21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

are: encouraging the faculty to visit other schools which have developed successful curriculum projects; having a survey of the present curriculum made either by an outside agency or by the local faculty; encouraging teachers to attend summer school curriculum courses and curriculum workshops; making studies which will show whether the school is or is not meeting the real needs of its students.¹⁰

Many different forms of organization for curriculum work are possible. One such planning group might consist of representatives of the administration, the faculty, the students, the community, the board of education, and the parents. Sub-groups and committees may be formed for special phases of the work. The fundamental principles of group action should be followed throughout the entire program of work. Consultants from the ISSCP are available when the need is felt by one or more groups.¹¹

Each school undertaking curriculum revision will need to avail itself of many kinds of information. There should be information regarding the effectiveness of the present program and methods of the school, the students enrolled in the school as well as those who have discontinued attendance, the sociological nature of the local community, and jobs in the community.¹² The ISSCP has sponsored certain basic studies which have yielded valuable information concerning (1) the holding power of the schools, (2) the selective character of pupil participation, (3) hidden tuition costs, (4) types of pupils who remain in communities, and (5) evaluation of guidance services.¹³ An article dealing with these studies will appear in a later issue of the *Illinois English Bulletin*.

An important part of curriculum improvement should be a program for measuring the progress being made. Schools should keep in mind that " . . . all techniques of evaluation should be directed toward the end of measuring changes in behavior."¹⁴ Again the ISSCP offers to provide the assistance of specialists to aid local schools in their work of evaluation.

Such are the underlying principles and the philosophy of the ISSCP. This statewide curriculum program offers the inspiration and practical assistance which many forward-looking teachers of English will welcome as they attempt to make English meet the "needs of youth" and the "requirements of society."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 29-32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

SPRING MEETING

Each year, in March, the Illinois Association of Teachers of English holds a meeting in Chicago. This year's meeting will be held on Saturday, March 17, in the dining room (eighth floor) of Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company, State Street, Chicago.

Festivities begin at 10 a. m. "Festivities" is the right word, for we shall eat breakfast and conduct a business meeting simultaneously—a second breakfast for the early risers. Following the business meeting will be a program arranged by Miss Alice Grant, chairman of the program committee.

At lunch—still at Carson's—we have been invited to join the English Club of Greater Chicago. The speaker will be Professor E. K. Brown of the University of Chicago. He will discuss Willa Cather, whose biography he is now writing.

IMPORTANT: If you are going to the luncheon, write *at once* to Miss Nellie Kearins for your reservation. Her address is 3432 Jackson Boulevard, Chicago 24. She should receive your reservation by March 10. The cost of the luncheon is \$1.75.

All members of the I.A.T.E. are invited to this meeting.

On June 2 and 3, the English Club of Greater Chicago is holding a meeting at Allerton Park, near Monticello. Miss Nelle Groh of the Chicago club has written I.A.T.E. President Addie Hochstrasser as follows: "Our club has made a reservation for Allerton Park on June 2 and 3, and we plan to have a council meeting there on Saturday, arriving in time for a luncheon meeting. We plan to stay over until Sunday. The rates are \$8.50 and \$9.00 per day, including meals. Would some of your group like to join us in a semi-professional get-together? We think it will be a lot of fun. Think it over."

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President—Miss Addie Hochstrasser—Paris
Vice-President—Miss Hila Stone—Robinson
Secretary—Miss Edith Groom—Warren
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Program Committee—Miss Eleanor Anderson—Danville; Mr. Wilmer Lamar—Decatur
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